

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

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Investigation of: *
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MV ETHAN ALLEN, *
LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK, *
OCTOBER 2, 2005 * Docket No.: DCA 06 MM 001
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Interview of: MARGUERITE RAMSEY

National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20594

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
notice.

BEFORE: MARIETTE BURER

APPEARANCES:

MARIETTE BURER
National Transportation Safety Board

MAJ. STEVE RIVENBURGH
New York State Park Police

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MS. BURER: My name is Mariette Burer with the
3 National Transportation Safety Board. And I have with me.

4 MAJ. RIVENBURGH: Steve Rivenburgh from New York
5 State Park Police.

6 MS. BURER: And your name?

7 MS. RAMSEY: Marguerite Ramsey.

8 MS. BURER: Okay. I understand that you were a
9 passenger (indiscernible) when it capsized on October 2nd?

10 MS. RAMSEY: Yes, I was.

11 BY MS. BURER:

12 Q. Okay, can you explain to me or tell me in your own
13 words what happened?

14 A. Well, we were just floating along and the gentleman
15 was just giving us the information about the things. And it
16 was a beautiful sun shiny day. The windows were all open and
17 so was the top of the boat. And we were on the right side of
18 the boat sitting in a two seater. On the other side of the
19 boat there was three people that were sitting about three feet.
20 And we were chit-chatting and all of a sudden a rush of water
21 came over the side so fast that my friend, Marge Perry, was
22 swept off the seat and went down towards the bag. I was swept
23 off like across and hit my chest very hard on one of the
24 benches. I thought I was going to be able to stand up, but
25 water was coming in so fast in the boat faster than anything.

1 And I was under water completely under water within a matter of
2 seconds. And I don't know if I was thrown out of the boat. I
3 just seen someone moving around that was above me, but I must
4 have turned and I think I got thrown back into the boat but I'm
5 not positive. And I was kind of tangled up in the chairs which
6 were now was upside down. And I was swallowing the water. And
7 I said to myself, my God I have to get out of here. And all of
8 a sudden I seen like a path and I said, I might be able to get
9 through.

10 And I saw a light further down and I kind of paddled
11 my legs, because I'm not a swimmer. And I went through the
12 light and I don't know if it was a window or what it was. And
13 I went out and I went up and the next thing I know I was up in
14 the air. And I grabbed a hold of the edge and a gentleman took
15 hold of my hand and gave me something to hold onto, a little
16 bitty rope. And people were screaming at the end of the rope.
17 And all of a sudden I could feel something under my feet like a
18 window or something which gave me a little more stability.
19 And when we were coming up close and this lady held out her
20 hand to the woman that was on her shoulders and pulled her over
21 to the steps and pulled her on. And then she took my hand and
22 did the same thing for me and she pulled me on. And then we
23 pulled on, all three of us we were helping her. All of us were
24 pulling on another lady. And I had a terrible pain in my chest
25 and she pulled me further back into the boat and then they had

1 more room to get more people on it and for me to sit down. And
2 she pulled about eight people onto the boat and to the shore.
3 A lot of people on shore had chairs and they had water and
4 blankets. And at the end just going around and checking people
5 to see how badly they were hurt. And I guess my chest was
6 hurting so bad I was looking for my friend and I couldn't see
7 her anywhere. Another one of my friends came up and said, are
8 you all right? So, I spotted that one and I said, see if you
9 can find Marge.

10 And by that time they were taking me away in the
11 ambulance. And I went to the emergency room and I don't
12 remember speaking to the doctor but they were asking my
13 children's phone numbers. And they were checking me over and
14 the next thing I know I was up in ICU. And one of the
15 gentlemen that had brought me in he was talking to the lady
16 (indiscernible) lady. And from then on the doctors and nurses
17 were taking care of me. That's about all I can tell you.

18 Q. Do you remember when you were actually discharged
19 from the hospital?

20 A. I was the last one to be discharged. I had some type
21 of condition that they wanted to do a heart catheter. So,
22 Tuesday afternoon they did a heart catheter and they did a
23 cardiogram. And also I had a lot of bumps on my head. And they
24 did a cat scan. They were afraid I might be bleeding between
25 the skull. And I was terribly, terribly bruised on my chest

1 area, shoulders, legs, knees. I was returned back to my room
2 and kept overnight to find out what they were going to have to
3 do or not do. And everyone else was released, a couple of them
4 that morning, and I was the last one at ten o'clock. I was
5 told at that time I would be able to go home by my doctor and
6 cardiologist.

7 Q. Where you one of the passengers that was on that bus
8 go over to the Georgian? One of the hotels that is local here?

9 A. I don't remember -- I wasn't taken over to the
10 Georgian until I was taken over by car. And I left on the
11 plane. There was twelve of us that left when I came back to
12 the Georgian hotel.

13 Q. Okay, do you remember, as far as, the boating was
14 concerned and the seating who was sitting in front of you?

15 A. Yes, there were two gentlemen sitting in front of me.
16 One of them was a friend and one was a friend of a friend but I
17 mean one I knew and one was just sitting with him.

18 Q. Right, and do you have their names? Do you?

19 A. One was Russell Quick and I don't know the other
20 gentleman's name.

21 Q. Okay, do you remember who was sitting behind you?

22 A. No, I don't.

23 Q. Okay, and then you mentioned something about the
24 people that were sitting in the three setters. Do you know who
25 they were?

1 A. I knew some of them that were close to the front or
2 some of them that was from Livonia that were directly across
3 from me. I don't remember.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. One of them was a Carol Wilson that was sitting
6 towards the front. And I knew they were there. And our leader
7 that was over the Detroit group she had come on last. And she
8 was sitting up near where the captain was.

9 Q. Where the captain was?

10 A. Yes, the captain was towards the front of the boat.

11 Q. Okay, do you remember anything, as far as, when you
12 first boarded onto the vessel in regards to the captain? Do
13 you know the location or do you remember the location where he
14 was standing and his demeanor?

15 A. All I remember, uh, we was just told to board the
16 boat. There was no one collecting tickets there at this time.
17 And we were just going on and was told to sit on either side of
18 the boat.

19 Q. And this was done by the captain?

20 A. No, no, we just got on and seated ourselves and where
21 we thought we wanted to be.

22 Q. Okay, and where was the captain at the actual time
23 that you boarded the boat?

24 A. I couldn't remember. I don't know if he was on the
25 docks or on the boat. I don't really know.

1 Q. Okay, during the trip that you did before the
2 capsizing do you remember where the captain was?

3 A. He was very close.

4 Q. And is that seating in the front or in the back?

5 A. The front.

6 Q. The front, okay.

7 A. And there were several people that we were beside
8 sitting up in that area.

9 Q. Can you describe to me the front of the boat?

10 A. No, I don't think I can.

11 Q. Okay, and, can you tell me a little bit about the
12 windows again?

13 A. They were all open.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And they were all fastened to the ceiling.

16 Q. Okay, do you know who -- do you remember where the
17 life jackets are or where located?

18 A. I guess I could see them myself or either the
19 gentleman that was sitting in the front of me he said that
20 looked around and they were in the back of the boat.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. When we were boarding, but I actually did not see
23 them myself.

24 Q. Okay, so where you were boarding was actually in the
25 back of the boat?

1 A. Yes, we boarded on the back.

2 Q. But you yourself did not see the life jackets. Is
3 this correct?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And what about any kind of instructions or safety
6 briefing from the captain?

7 A. Not that I remember.

8 Q. Okay, can you tell me a little bit about your
9 conditions? First of all I'm going to back up here. Mrs.
10 Ramsey, did you have a good view of the lake and your
11 surroundings where you were sitting?

12 A. Uh, where I was sitting, I was sitting on the right
13 side of boat which was actually where the lake was, you know,
14 the full lake. And the three setters was hunkered towards the
15 shore where all the scenery was.

16 Q. Correct. And how was your view? What did you look
17 at most of the time?

18 A. I was looking and listening and watching the houses.
19 Now, I did see a boat on the right side, a large boat, that had
20 three or four decks that had passengers on it that were going
21 sight seeing. And it was going, not real fast, and it was
22 going right up showing people the lake up the other side of the
23 shore.

24 Q. And when you saw this boat that was sight seeing
25 along with you. Where were -- do you remember the location?

1 A. It was before, before we reached the point of where
2 the boat had its accident. It was a little while before. It
3 had already passed us completely.

4 Q. The larger boat had already passed you completely?

5 A. Um-huh.

6 Q. And which way was it going when it passed you?

7 A. The same direction that we were going up the river.

8 Q. Okay, since you were sitting by the window. Right?

9 A. I was sitting by where there was a window, yes.

10 Q. Did you see any kind of waving from that particular
11 boat?

12 A. No, because I wasn't paying too much attention to
13 that. I was watching the scenery, you know, on the opposite
14 side there.

15 Q. Okay, and was it easy to see from where you were
16 sitting to see all the beautiful homes that the captain spoke
17 about during this particular trip?

18 A. We had a good view of them, yes.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. We never had to stand or anything like that.

21 Q. Okay, can you tell me a little bit about seats of the
22 boat?

23 A. The seats were wood and metal and they were fastened
24 down.

25 Q. Okay, were they comfortable?

1 A. They were comfortable. I thought it was odd that
2 there were two seats on one side and three seats on the other
3 side. I always thought that boats should be three and three,
4 but I don't know anything about balance whatsoever, so.

5 Q. Okay, you do not recall anyone actually collecting
6 tickets or doing a counting of the passengers?

7 A. They did count any passengers as they were getting
8 on.

9 Q. Who was he?

10 A. I don't know. There was no tickets taken on the
11 boat. We picked up the tickets while we were having lunch.

12 Q. Did she give the tickets over then.

13 A. She handed them to someone that, you know, knew that
14 we were boarding.

15 Q. Okay, and do you recall who was counting the
16 passengers?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay, okay, how long do you think that you were in
19 the water?

20 A. Well, it seemed like forever but I guess I couldn't
21 have been down there no more than five minutes or thirty
22 minutes. I don't think you could have been down there that
23 long but it seemed forever to me.

24 Q. Right, do you remember any kind of activity on the
25 dock at all?

1 A. What kind of activity?

2 Q. Any kind of activity that caught your attention like
3 the water.

4 A. We were swept away and I heard people for a short
5 moment until got under water. They just said, the boat is
6 tipping and that is all I could think or really remember.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. It was like two seconds (indiscernible) was anywhere
9 around you never been able even if they were anywhere close.
10 It just happened too quick.

11 Q. Right, and do you recall how many people were
12 actually counting the passengers?

13 A. No, I don't.

14 Q. Okay, was the captain involved in counting the
15 passengers?

16 A. Not that I can recall.

17 Q. Okay, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over right
18 now. Thank you very much.

19 BY MAJ. RIVENBURGH:

20 Q. Mrs. Ramsey.

21 A. I'm sorry I can't be more help, but that is all I can
22 remember.

23 Q. Mrs. Ramsey, this is Steve Rivenburgh. I just want
24 to touch on a couple of points. Do you know if your bus driver
25 was going to go on the trip with you on the tour?

1 A. No, he was to take care of the bus when we were on
2 the boat.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And then we were to board the bus and then go back to
5 pick up our registry for our hotel. And that night we had a
6 show and a dinner that we were supposed to have.

7 Q. And you mentioned water, a gush of water came in over
8 the side. Which side did it come in over?

9 A. It came in on the right where I was sitting and it
10 was traveling very fast. And it seemed like it was half in and
11 half out if that makes any sense. Right along the edge. And
12 it came right at me and it went, but it hit Marge first and she
13 went sliding. And it looked like she was heading towards the
14 back which would have been the back of the boat. And then I
15 went back after her and I never saw her again. And I was under
16 water before I knew it completely.

17 Q. And you said it hit Ms. Perry first? The water?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay, did it hit her feet?

20 A. No, I think it hit our chair.

21 Q. Hit your chair.

22 A. And she went, whoa, and away she went.

23 Q. Did it come in, in front of you or behind you?

24 A. I would say in front. It was traveling along the
25 edge of the boat and then seemed like it crossed in front of

1 me. But, like I said, it hit so fast that she was gone and I
2 was gone.

3 Q. You mentioned that you saw the three or four deck
4 vessel headed in the same direction? How far away was it?

5 A. I only one and it was far enough away from us that it
6 was more like the other side of the shore. I don't know how
7 wide the lake is but it was far enough away from us. It didn't
8 start out the same time that we did but it was really passing.
9 We were only out I think, just guessing, fifteen minutes. And
10 my one friend that I saw after my watch never stopped and hers
11 had stopped exactly at three o'clock.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I remember talking to her about it, so.

14 Q. Okay, I just want to go over the one piece again
15 about the water that came in, the right side, the side that you
16 were sitting, and it kind of ran right down side of the boat?

17 A. Right side of the boat and it was half in and half
18 out, mostly in.

19 Q. Uh-huh, okay, did you see anybody fall off their
20 seats besides yourself?

21 A. After Marge, no. But I could see the boat was
22 tilting so far that a lot of them were hovering. It was
23 happening so fast that they might have been knocked off their
24 seats. Now, the gentleman that was sitting in front of me I
25 thought I saw him in the water. And he remembers he thinks he

1 was thrown through right on the other side through a window.
2 Again, that is just hearsay.

3 Q. Okay, I thank you for your time.

4 A. I'm sorry I can't be more helpful.

5 Q. That's okay.

6 BY MS. BURER:

7 Q. Ma'am, if you don't mind I have one question. Do you
8 recall what you were wearing on the day of the accident?

9 A. Yes, I do. I was a little heavier at the time and it
10 was a little cool. Just slacks and a little sweat shirt and my
11 tennis shoes. And I had a jacket with me because there was a
12 little breeze.

13 Q. And the slacks, do you recall what material they were
14 made of?

15 A. They were just like a polyester. And my top was just
16 cotton. Cotton supposedly. And my purse was sitting along
17 beside me.

18 Q. Okay, well, I'm sorry for your loss and the ordeal
19 that you had to go through but I really do appreciate you
20 taking the time out to help us with this interview.

21 A. I hope I could be of some help, because, it really
22 was a tragic accident.

23 Q. Right, and I appreciate your time. Thank you.

24 MAJ. RIVENBURGH: Sorry for your loss, ma'am.

25 MS. RAMSEY: Thank you.

1 MS. BURER: Okay, we'll go ahead and turn off the
2 recording.

3 MS. RAMSEY: Okay.

4 MS. BURER: Thank you.

5 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
6 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: MV Ethan Allen
 Lake George, New York
 October 2, 2005
 Interview of Marguerite Ramsey

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA 06 MM 001

PLACE: Washington, D.C.

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Peggy Daniels
Transcriber